

FRONT LINES



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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

APRIL 2006

Senate Confirms Tobias USAID Administrator

The U.S. Senate confirmed Randall L. Tobias March 29 to be 14th administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development. He was sworn into office two days later.

Tobias told more than 1,000 USAID employees at a town hall gathering April 3 that he was meeting with them as his first official act to show how “pleased and proud” he was to head the Agency.

USAID staffers are “creative, capable, passionate, and committed,” but the Agency often failed to get credit for tremendous achievements over the past five decades, Tobias said at the meeting in the Agency’s Washington headquarters.

USAID helped reduce poverty, lengthen life spans, reduce infant mortality, defeat smallpox, reduce hunger, and increase literacy, said Tobias, former president and CEO of Eli Lilly pharmaceutical giant and for the past two years head of the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

“We have to find a better way to tell that story,” said Tobias, observing that the Agency often behaves “on the defensive” rather than asserting its achievements.

Tobias will serve concurrently as the State Department’s director of foreign assistance, a new position created to coordinate all U.S. foreign aid.

He said he will spend mornings at State—as former Administrator Andrew Natsios did three times a week to attend senior meetings with the secretary of state—and then shift over to the administrator’s office at USAID.

He will combine, at State, about 80 to 100 staff from both State and USAID involved in planning, policy, monitoring, and budgets.

In order to show Congress and the American public—who provide foreign aid funds—that assistance is effective, he said he will reform the way information is collected and prepared.

Tobias said he expects to create “coherent comprehensive plans” for countries and regions, and expects “greater ownership” of assistance projects on the part of leaders and citizens of developing countries.

He sought to reassure Agency staffers that “there is no hidden agenda” for State to take over USAID. Foreign aid has a new strengthened role in the nation’s foreign policy and the new National Security Strategy, even if USAID is not often mentioned by name, he said.

“This is no longer about any one agency—it is about the whole federal government,” he said.

U.S. foreign assistance nearly tripled since 2000 to \$27 billion he said. But since it is spread among several agencies, it is important to show effectiveness and to

▼ SEE SENATE CONFIRMS TOBIAS ON PAGE 13



Afghan farmer Arabab Zarin stands in front of field that once produced opium poppies. Zarin is one of thousands of farmers who grew poppies to escape poverty.

Afghan Farmers Are Switching Crops

BADAKSHAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan—Farmer Arabab Zarin, 59, stands in his striped green robe at the edge of his snow-covered plot of ground, pointing to its far edge. “All this was poppy,” he said. “Red and blue poppies. I grew it for three years and then stopped.”

He is one of thousands of Afghan farmers who turned to poppy in desperation during years of war and Taliban misrule. Income from opium paid for many of the family’s basic necessities—such as their home—and a few luxuries.

But Afghanistan’s opium quickly became the source of more than 80 percent of the world’s heroin. President Hamid Karzai urged farmers not to grow the illegal drug. Zarin and other farmers listened to that appeal and to promises made by their governor and foreign aid groups to help them

▼ SEE AFGHAN FARMERS ON PAGE 13

More Food Aid Sent to Kenya

USAID is providing an additional \$16 million in emergency food assistance to Kenya, where the northeastern region is in the midst of a prolonged drought.

The aid, to go through the World Food Program, will provide 22,090 metric tons of food. This latest food, announced March 16, brings the Agency’s response to the 2006 drought in Kenya to more than \$32 million.

As many as 3.5 million people in Kenya are in need of food. The drought this year, however, stretches across several Horn of Africa countries, including Somalia, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. Since the start of the year, USAID has contributed more than \$130 million for emergency relief efforts in these countries.

For updates about the food crises in Horn of Africa countries and the Agency’s efforts to help, visit www.usaid.gov. ★

FIRST LADY AND FRIENDS



First Lady Laura Bush, left, and actress Nafisa Ali pose with the cast of *Galli Galli Sim Sim*, India’s version of *Sesame Street*. See story on the Indonesian version of the show on pg. 15.

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Jordan Justice for Foley Killers



Laurence Foley

AMMAN, Jordan—The two men a Jordanian court convicted of murdering former USAID official Laurence Foley were executed by hanging March 11.

Salem bin Suweid and Yasser Freihah, both militants aligned with Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of al-Qaida in Iraq, were sentenced to death in 2004 for gunning down Foley outside his home in Amman on Oct. 28, 2002. According to the Associated Press, the executions were the first in Jordan of al-Qaida-linked militants.

Foley, who had just turned 60 when he died, was the executive officer at USAID/Jordan, and had worked in public service for 37 years with USAID, the Peace Corps, and juvenile and adult offenders in Contra Costa County, Calif. In addition to serving in Jordan, Foley worked with USAID in Bolivia, Peru, Zimbabwe, and Washington.

Faith-Based Work Recognized

WASHINGTON—President Bush recognized USAID for its work with faith-based organizations at the second White House National Conference on Faith-Based and Community Initiatives March 9.

In 2005, USAID awarded \$591 million in assistance to these organizations, up from \$521 million in 2004. Faith-based organizations compete with other organizations for federal assistance. The faith-based groups have used Agency grants to provide food aid, disaster relief, HIV/AIDS care and prevention, and other humanitarian relief.

“Faith-based organizations provide invaluable services to people in need around the world, and USAID is proud to have them as partners in this lifesaving effort,” said Acting Administrator Frederick W. Schieck.

Armyworms Threaten Tanzania

WASHINGTON—USAID is spending \$50,000 through its mission in Tanzania to buy and distribute equipment and supplies to help that country’s government respond to an infestation of armyworms.

A large-scale outbreak is threatening tens of thousands of hectares of crops in more than 15 districts in Iringa, Dodoma, Singida, Manyara, Morogoro, and Lindi regions of central and southern Tanzania.

The armyworm, a serious pest in sub-Saharan Africa, damages cereal crops, sugarcane, pastures, and rangeland. The 2005–06 migratory armyworm season began in southern Africa following the onset of rains in December 2005.

Prolonged dry spells, combined with isolated rainstorms in affected areas of Tanzania, have created favorable conditions for mass breeding. Tanzania officials say the first infestations in the country were reported in January 2006.

Although endemic to Tanzania, this year’s armyworm outbreak has the potential to cause extensive damage, with reports of more than 63,000 hectares of cereal crops already destroyed, exacerbating the food insecurity caused by current drought conditions.

W. African Seafood Exhibited in Boston

BOSTON—Five West African companies exhibited selections of that region’s wild fish and seafood products at the 25th annual International Boston Seafood Show.

The companies—Somascir Frigo, Société d’Elaboration des Produits Halieutiques, and Mauritano-Chinoise de Pêche from Mauritania; Kerewan Fishing Co. from The Gambia; and Sangomar Fishing Co. from Senegal—received funding from USAID to attend the exhibit, which featured several varieties of fresh, frozen, dried, and smoked fish and shellfish. Products of special interest include spotted sea bass fillets, smoked barracuda, sole fillets, conch meat, tuna, frozen cuttlefish, and octopus.

The West Africa Global Competitiveness Hub, a project funded by USAID to increase Africa’s share of world trade, and the Africa Fast Track Trade program of the International Executive Service Corps sponsored the exhibitors to participate at the Boston Seafood Show.

Emergency Insurance Makes Debut

The World Food Program (WFP) said on March 6 it had signed an agreement with French insurer AXA Re for \$7 million in contingency funding to provide coverage in the event of an “extreme drought” in Ethiopia this year. The policy is the first of its kind for such emergencies, WFP said.

The policy was calculated using rainfall data from 26 weather stations in Ethiopia. Payment is triggered when the data indicate that rainfall is below historic averages for March through October. A rainfall level that low is considered a predictor of widespread crop failure. The insurance policy assumes losses from 17 million poor farmers.

“The humanitarian emergency insurance contract might, in the future, offer us a way of insuring against these massive losses before they spell destitution for millions of families,” WFP Executive Director James Morris said.

Michael E. Hess, USAID’s assistant administrator in the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, backs the insurance purchase. “I would like to see it spread,” he said in an interview with the *New York Times*.

Hess, who was previously a risk reviewer and vice president at Citibank, also noted in the interview that most American farmers already have insurance in case of drought.

Japanese Study U.S. Disaster Response

WASHINGTON—A delegation of Japanese officials visited USAID Feb. 10 as part of a tour of the United States to conduct research on disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

The Office of Volunteers for Prosperity (VfP Office) and the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) presented a briefing to the 17-member Japanese delegation composed of members of the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly.

“We are very interested in benefiting from USAID’s experience in disaster management overseas,” said Erena Niwa, a representative of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. “In order to respond effectively, a good relationship is essential among the many elements in the national government, local governments, NGOs, and the private sector.”

Another objective of the group was to learn how to integrate volunteers and private sector aid into relief efforts in Japan. Jack Hawkins, director of the

VfP Office, explained how trained American volunteers are deployed overseas through VfP partner organizations, nonprofits, and companies for short-term assignments.

“While disasters require specially trained responders, VfP volunteers are experts in a variety of sectors such as healthcare, information technology, and education, and they have played important postdisaster and long-term reconstruction roles,” he said.

The delegation also learned that OFDA coordinated with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to help sort and distribute foreign aid for Hurricane Katrina. “For the first time in its history, OFDA provided assistance for a U.S. domestic emergency following Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice’s request that USAID take the lead role in managing humanitarian donations from the international community,” said Michael Marx, an OFDA division director.

In addition to USAID, the Japanese delegation visited FEMA headquarters and the Pentagon in Washington. The delegation’s first stop was at the hurricane-ravaged parts of New Orleans, where members met with the city’s mayor as well as with officials of the FEMA Area Field Office. The delegation also visited New York’s Office of Emergency Management and the New York City Council.

\$10M Pledged to UN Emergency Fund

NEW YORK—The United States has pledged \$10 million to the United Nations’ upgraded Central Emergency Response Fund, a new \$500 million reserve designed to ensure a more predictable and timely humanitarian response to disasters and complex emergencies in the world.

Bill Garvelink, senior deputy assistant administrator for the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA), announced the pledge March 9 at the UN. Garvelink leads USAID’s participation in the UN’s Donor Support Group, which helps guide the international response to disasters like the recent earthquake in Pakistan.

The Donor Support Group is part of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). “OCHA is an important partner with USAID in any humanitarian response,” Garvelink said. “The formation of the ODSG has brought like-minded countries together to help not only support OCHA but also build alliances for better collaboration in the humanitarian community.”

Chaired by the United States since July 2005, the group is composed of OCHA’s primary donors; there are currently 18 members. It complements the General Assembly’s work by eliciting feedback on specific policy and management issues within a limited group of member states. The group also gives donors an opportunity to discuss with OCHA the administrative, policy, and operational aspects of its work.

Membership criteria include a \$300,000 contribution to OCHA and a willingness to provide political support to strengthen OCHA’s work and role within the UN humanitarian system. This year, the group is focusing on reforming humanitarian efforts within the UN, including financing, staffing, and management of UN operations. ★

NEW HOMES, RENEWED HOPES FOR RECOVERY



RECONSTRUCTION BEGINS—A family in Langla Village in NW Pakistan display their \$1,000 building kit given by USAID through Catholic Relief Services. It includes metal roofing sheets, insulation, stove, stovepipe, wire, rope, tarps, floorpads, nails, and tools. Behind rises the frame of their new house. See Pakistan photo essay on pg. 16.



Rwanda



MISSION OF THE MONTH

KIBUYE PROVINCE, Rwanda—From a point overlooking Rwanda's famous thousand hills, Alfredo Nuno of Starbucks Corp. took a look at his watch. It not only tells the time and date, but also measures the altitude—2,200 meters.

"This is perfect for producing the best coffee," he said recently.

Nearly 12 years ago, these hills were the center of some of the worst atrocities of a genocide that left nearly 1 million Rwandans dead. Today, however, Rwanda is a relatively safe country in a turbulent neighborhood. Per capita income is \$220 per year, and Rwanda ranks 159 out of 177 in the 2005 Human Development Index, a UN tool that measures wellbeing throughout the world. With a population growth rate of 2.9 percent, and 329 people per square kilometer, Rwanda has the highest population density in Africa. Most farms are less than half a hectare and cannot support families.

Innovative response

Nuno, a green coffee trader for Starbucks, came to Kibuye Feb. 21 to congratulate Rwandan farmers for producing what he describes as "one of the world's best coffees."

In mid-March, sales of the coffee began in 5,000 Starbucks outlets around the United States as Rwanda Blue Bourbon, becoming the 10th Black Apron Exclusive coffee sold by the Seattle-based coffee giant. Black Apron Exclusive is a category Starbucks reserves for superior-quality coffees.

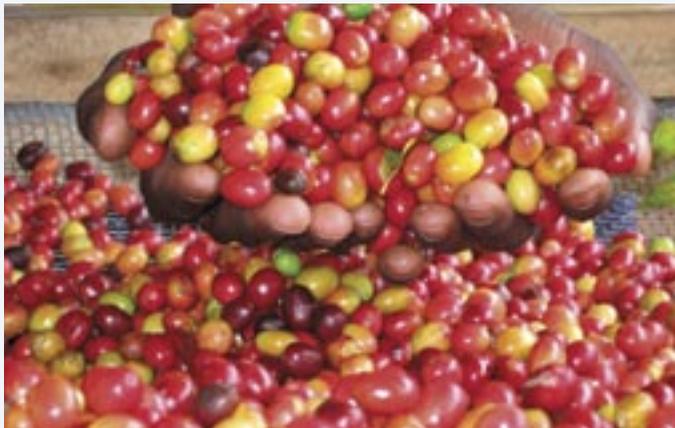
"Five years ago, before USAID got involved, Rwanda produced no specialty coffee," said Kevin Mullally, USAID/Rwanda's mission director, who accompanied Nuno to the community celebration.

"USAID has spent more than \$10 million investing in coffee washing stations, training of farmers, and coffee "cuppers," or tasters, and rebuilding local infrastructure," he said. "This investment has paid off—Rwandan farmers are now able to pick, process, and export specialty coffee. This is one of Africa's great success stories and we are proud to be a part of it.

"USAID can justifiably say we created this industry here in Rwanda."

Back in 2001, USAID started work to build up Rwanda's capacity to produce specialty coffee as part of the Rwanda Rural and Economic Growth team's focus on agricultural products that have a high value for export—over 90 percent of Rwandans work in agriculture. At the time, the country was producing only low-grade beans.

Since then, USAID has provided assistance to establish 32 coffee washing stations, trained tasters, improved rural infra-



Only red cherries are suitable for Rwanda's specialty coffee.

structure, and facilitated relationships with international coffee buyers. Approximately 40,000 Rwandan coffee farmers have seen their incomes double because of the assistance of USAID coffee projects.

Results

"People are working together in a way that we would never imagine possible," said Chemonics' Maurice Wiener, who is the director for the coffee project. "The owners of coffee washing stations are telling me that they provide a forum for reconciliation for the survivors of the genocide, the local population, returnees, and demobilized soldiers who work together in the fight against poverty."

Income from specialty coffee production has helped the community build schools and individuals make home improvements. All seven of Helen Nyirangomituje's children, for example, are now attending school, a result of her increased income as a coffee farmer.

The celebration at the Gatere washing station in Kibuye Province included Nuno, Mullally, the local media, over 400 farmers, 20 cows, and 300 goats. The animals were gifts from Starbucks to the top-producing farmers of Gatere and Karengera washing stations to reward their hard work. Cows are the ultimate status symbol in Rwanda.

"It is an extraordinary achievement," Nuno said during the event. "This coffee washing station has only been up and running for one year, and look at what they have achieved." Addressing the audience he said, "we are here to celebrate today. Starbucks is going to sell your coffee as one of the world's best coffees."

The coffee comes in fuchsia foil bags inside decorative black boxes—packaging reserved for Starbucks high-end coffees. A letter written to Starbucks by Theobald Bavugamenshi, the general manager of the Gatere washing station, will also be featured at 5,000 of the outlets in March and April. In it, Bavugamenshi recognizes USAID's support for the effort. Last year, Theobald received \$90,000 to build a coffee washing station through the Bank of Kigali as a result of a loan guarantee through the Development Credit Authority.

Starbucks has approximately 40 million customers per week worldwide. Over half of the outlets plan to feature the Black Apron Exclusive. A good cup of coffee translates into a better quality of life for Rwandan coffee farmers.

Next year, Starbucks says it hopes to buy more coffee from Rwanda. "This is just the beginning," Nuno said, "of what we hope will be a long-term relationship." ★

Sybella Wilkes Moutzis contributed to this article.



Bernadette Mukambaliye and her baby, Giselle, meet Alfredo Nuno, a Starbucks green coffee trader, at a celebration of the coffee giant's partnership with some Rwanda coffee growers. During the event, Starbucks rewarded the coffee growers with gifts of cows and goats. Mukambaliye received a goat.

Notes from Schieck

★★★★★★★



Latin American Gangs Take Hold in Organized Crime

Beginning this month, television viewers in Guatemala could tune in to a reality show about 10 ex-gang members trying to reform their lives and become legitimate businessmen. In this instance, reality television was indeed a reflection of real life.

USAID, which helped fund the broadcasts, is working with other U.S. government agencies, Latin American and Caribbean nations, and NGOs to go up against what is an emerging and serious issue in international development.

Gangs no longer confine their turf to the neighborhoods where they live. Some of the gangs in Latin America are, in fact, international criminal organizations with tentacles that reach outside their borders and into the United States and beyond. Their international portfolios include kidnappings, robberies, extortion, assassinations, and trafficking—in people and contraband. Gangs contribute to crime that accounts for between 12 percent and 14 percent of the gross domestic product of some Latin American countries.

Getting a firm handle on their numbers is next to impossible—conservative estimates put the number at 150,000.

What is less confusing is why young people join gangs: lack of education, poverty, marginalized urban areas, disjointed family lives, and ineffective judicial systems, among other factors. And these are also the kinds of problems where USAID programs can and do make a difference.

This month, the Agency is releasing a report that assesses gangs in Latin America. The report focuses its analysis on El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Nicaragua. These are regions I know well—both from my USAID posts in the region during my early years with the Agency and during my stint with the Inter-American Development Bank in the 1990s. The report concludes that there are many problems, and that they are complex. But there are also many ideas to address those problems.

The reality show in Guatemala, for example, is one. At the end of the series taping, the participants opened a car wash and shoe repair business, and demonstrate to others that there are genuine alternatives to life as a gang member.

Another is USAID's Artisan Development Program, which State Department Undersecretary Karen Hughes visited earlier this year. This is no effort at giving former gang members

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ECONOMIC GROWTH, AGRICULTURE, AND TRADE

Local Teams Clean Up Kabul Streets

KABUL, Afghanistan—After years of conflict, rebuilding in this capital is bringing all sorts of changes, including cleaner streets and parks.

“It was not the Kabul I remember,” said Afzal Qayoumi, of International City/County Management Association’s CityLinks program. With USAID funding, the program has fielded an Afghan-American engineer and a small local staff to begin working with the city’s overwhelmed sanitation department on hauling away rubbish.

“We had to find a way to begin to help people,” Qayoumi added. “We talked to residents, the leaders at the mosque, and the mayor, and it became clear that trash collection was a critical issue.”

Working in Kabul’s District 4, an area of businesses and older homes, Qayoumi and his team worked to fashion a unique trash collection system. First, all piles of trash were inventoried and removed by contract workers. Then, using city crews, weekly routes were established in a 3,000-home neighborhood.

Crews of 11 were created: one truck driver and 10 men, with two on each street using a wheelbarrow to collect garbage door-to-door—a “back to the future” solution drawn from the memory of residents who remembered when trash was picked up by horse-drawn carts.

“This is my idea of development—using the resources available in a managed manner,” said Eric Richardson of USAID/Afghanistan’s urban programs team. “It’s amazing what the city of Kabul can accomplish with 10 men using wheelbarrows, shovels, buckets, and a dump truck.”

Kabul has been wrecked by 30 years of war. Dirt roads are cratered, create incessant dust during long periods of drought, and become impassable mud pits when it rains.

Trash is dumped at the end of each street and rarely collected by the city. Ditches are often blocked by trash, and wastewater stagnates along the street sides.

“We were careful to build a system that can be replicated throughout the city,” said Qayoumi.

Crews are trained and “graduate,” then continue picking up trash in the neighborhood. Leaders among the trainees are selected to become the leaders of the next group, so that 9,000 homes in Kabul are currently being served, with service to additional neighborhoods coming soon.

For Amena, a 65-year-old grandmother who is trying to rebuild the life of her family, regular Sunday trash collections means a lot. Standing in her front doorway one sunny morning, she said, “I make sure to bring my trash out every Sunday. Our neighborhood is much cleaner now.”

Improving the quality of life for Kabul residents is critical to building support for a fledgling democracy, Richardson said.

CityLinks is managed by the urban programs team in the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade’s Office of Poverty Reduction. The urban team also manages a CityLinks leader award that, in addition to establishing technical exchange partnerships, supports field outreach, program development, case studies, and evaluation.

In addition to Afghanistan, USAID supports CityLinks programs in nine other countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Europe.

Clearing trash away from city streets is “not very glamorous work,” Qayoumi admits. “But for these people, my countrymen, it is everything, for it is progress, and it will allow us to live a civilized life again.” ★



USAID and International City/County Management Association assist the municipality of Kabul to clean ditches to improve sanitation drainage and prevent illness. Some 17,200 meters of ditches have been cleaned and 308 cubic meters of sediment removed.

GLOBAL HEALTH

Efforts to Stem Bird Flu Pandemic Increase



A team of U.S. government and local health experts dressed in personal protective equipment use decontamination spray after investigating an outbreak of avian influenza H5N1 in wild birds and domestic poultry in Turkey in January.

In a six-week period between February and mid-March, more than 20 additional countries reported outbreaks of the highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 virus. Africa’s first outbreaks were confirmed in February beginning in Nigeria, and additional outbreaks were reported in the Middle East and in Europe, where the spread of the virus in birds has risen sharply in recent weeks.

Although still considered an animal disease, several countries, including Iraq, have reported human cases of H5N1. As of March 20, almost 180 people were confirmed to have contracted avian flu with 100 dead, most probably from contact with infected birds. This rapid spread of H5N1 has underscored the importance of effective in-country surveillance, reporting, and containment.

USAID dedicated \$22.1 million in FY 2005 to avian influenza preparedness and response activities in 27 countries, and in FY 2006 is implementing \$131.5 million to support global, regional, and country-level programs in over 50 countries around the world. With the U.S. government, other donors, and international governments, USAID is working to ensure that technical assistance, training, and key commodity support is provided.

In Azerbaijan, for instance, USAID provided 1,500 personal protective kits and technical assistance to improve the rapid collection of animal samples and strengthen procedures for surveillance and containment efforts. These efforts were largely responsible for getting confirmation of the major H5N1 outbreak in Azerbaijan.

The sooner H5N1 is identified, the better the chances for containment. Strengthening both animal and human disease surveillance is key to the Agency’s approach. USAID is supporting global, regional, and country-level efforts to improve surveillance—including support to the UN’s Food

and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization—by improving sample collection and disease reporting systems.

The Agency is also increasing community awareness of disease detection and reporting and is set to monitor spring migration routes of wild birds in partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Society.

The deputy director for USAID’s avian influenza unit, Murray Trostle, told Voice of America in an interview last month that, “The evidence is pretty good at this point that the wild birds are carrying the virus and playing a role in spreading it... It’s a detective story and it’s played out on the world stage in areas where we have little information and knowledge about what’s going on.”

Live animal trade is also playing an important role in spreading the virus.

USAID is working with its 89 field missions, as they are in a unique position to assist countries in responding to an outbreak—particularly within the first two weeks of a suspected outbreak.

According to Dr. Kent R. Hill, assistant administrator for Global Health, the best defense lies in international actions. “The United States, working in partnership with other nations, has undertaken a variety of initiatives to help improve the capability for disease surveillance and detection in other nations,” he said.

H5N1, a highly infectious strain of avian flu, occurs naturally among wild birds. About 200 million birds have died as a result of the virus, either from becoming infected or through precautionary culling.

Experts fear the virus could mutate into a form that is transmissible from person to person. If that happens and proper safeguards aren’t in place, medical experts predict a pandemic, which would likely cause widespread illness and death. ★

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

Ghanaian Pineapples Go To European Markets

ACCRA, Ghana—Farmers throughout this West African nation find it hard to export their produce because they lack cheap transport, appropriate technology, infrastructure, and knowledge of market demands.

Unable to export their products, most of the fruits and vegetables are sold locally—and fetch lower prices than they would in wealthier markets outside the country.

Five years ago, Kwabena Okwesi, a farmer from Ekumfi, was one of the thousands of smallholder farmers in Ghana who dealt with the frustrations of low prices and limited markets. A small producer of Sugarloaf pineapple, Okwesi once received a meager five cents per kilo at the local market and had no idea his pineapple's taste was popular in Europe.

Through food company Royal Ahold, however, Okwesi has discovered a way to expand his market and deliver his fruit to consumers in Europe.

Royal Ahold's partnership with USAID/Ghana began in 2002 after some of its company members traveled to Africa to discover ways the food firm could help farmers in developing countries increase income. After meeting with mission officials, Royal Ahold agreed to work with farmers in Ghana to supply its European supermarkets with fresh produce.

"Our alliance with Royal Ahold is a very powerful tool in assisting farmers to access markets," says Carol Wilson of USAID's Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade. "Farmers get direct market information from buyers, so they understand exactly what they have to produce. Importers get a reliable supply of diverse products, and the world benefits because these communities can thrive by taking advantage of trade opportunities."

The Royal Ahold deal is improving Ghanaian farmers' abilities to produce quality products and leading other firms such

as Blue Skies Limited to join USAID/Ghana and Royal Ahold's collaborative efforts.

Blue Skies, established in 1998, specializes in the export of pre-cut, ready-to-eat fruit, which must be certified to meet good agricultural practices for food quality and safety. Blue Skies was a logical partner in the program, because it already followed international standards to deliver locally produced pineapples to consumers at Royal Ahold supermarkets in Europe.

In March 2005, an opportunity opened up for fresh-cut, fair-trade Sugarloaf pineapples to be marketed by a Dutch supermarket chain. To meet demand, rural farmers had to comply with organic, good agricultural practice and fair-trade certification requirements. For farmers like Okwesi, the fair-trade label would mean a five-fold increase in income. Certification promised that Ghanaian pineapples would sell for 20 cents per kilo with an extra five-cent premium going to community projects to provide clean drinking water and build classroom expansions.

USAID/Ghana, through its Trade and Investment Program for a Competitive Export Economy, trained farmer groups on fair-trade principles. By April that same year, the farmers' groups were assessed and certified. Immediately, Blue Skies shipped 1,200 boxes of fruit to Holland under the fair-trade label.

With an annual order of 234 metric tons of Sugarloaf pineapples, the Ghanaian farmers now get premium prices, and have raised over \$7,000 annually in community development funds.

"This alliance continues to evolve, bringing in new agribusiness partners. We now have a more viable alliance based on the growing agribusiness connections within Ghana and their international market buyers. In the near future, this alliance will not be dependent on USAID support," says Ron Stryker of USAID/Ghana. ★



Kwabena Okwesi is one of many farmers in Ghana involved in a USAID alliance with Royal Ahold and Blue Skies to deliver fair-trade, ready-to-eat products to supermarkets in Europe. Income from Okwesi's pineapple harvest is helping enrich him and fund community development efforts.

DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Mali Radio Stations Bring News, Education



A USAID-funded radio station in Almoustarat, Mali, is helping neighboring Arab and Touareg communities reconcile long-standing conflicts and seek common ground.

Under the Conflict Management through Community Radio Program, USAID is helping establish 10 FM radio stations that will reach an estimated 385,000 people in Mali's northern regions. Seven have already hit the airwaves, and three are expected to come online in May or June.

"Radio is the most important medium for conveying balanced news and information and is ideally suited not only to education but to transmitting lessons of tolerance and conflict resolution and prevention," said Elisabeth Kvitashvili, director of the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM), which is responsible for the project, along with the Africa Bureau and the Mali Mission. CMM is part of the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance.

Mali is threatened by regional and tribal conflict, religious extremist groups with possible ties to terrorist organizations, and, since the Northern Peace Accord of 1996, a large number of disaffected youth and ex-combatants.

The nomadic populations of the north remain largely isolated, and are often marginalized from participation in decisions that affect their lives. That is where radio comes into play. The medium has a track record as a cost-effective means of delivering vital information on health, nutrition, education, peace, and democracy.

It also makes sense, because few people in the region have access to newspapers or information from television or the internet. Radios, however, are prevalent.

Work began to make the radio stations a reality in September 2004, when USAID provided a grant to the NGO Africare to assist with the work. USAID is spending about \$1.8 million on the effort. The first station, in Bourem Inaly, went on the air in June 2005, followed closely by stations in Lerneb, Almoustarat, Tessalit, Timetrine, and Anderamboukane. The seventh station began broadcasting in January in Essouk.

Three more stations are planned for Ber, Anefis, and Djebok.

The stations broadcast a variety of programming in addition to the standard fare of

local and world news, music, and entertainment. Over 75 percent of airtime is devoted to informational programming with topics like peacebuilding, women's empowerment, herder information, healthcare, economic and microfinance opportunities, and social and cultural issues. There are also education programs about the judiciary, voting, and democracy, as well as others targeted to children. Conflict prevention takes up a significant amount of air time.

Listeners say they can now discuss conflicts via the airwaves before issues escalate. But one radio station helped to convey lessons in conflict resolution before it began broadcasting.

When CMM and the Mali Mission assessed whether the best site for a radio station would be in Tarinkit, which has a predominately Touareg population, or Almoustarat, which is predominately Arab, the latter was ultimately selected as the most viable site.

This, however, caused immediate dismay. The two communities had a history of long-standing conflicts. USAID made it clear that the two communities had to come to an agreement or the station would be installed elsewhere. Representatives of the two groups met, and eventually agreed on Almoustarat as the site.

It was the first time inhabitants of the district had collaborated on anything. Members of these two communities were astonished at what they had been able to achieve: they worked together to build the station and selected radio staff and a steering committee that fairly represented both communities.

"Because of the conflict mitigation work done in preparation of the selection of the appropriate site, the two communities are now working hand-in-hand for the first time in decades," said Dennis Bilodeau, of USAID/Mali.

"Programming at the station is carefully designed to address issues facing both communities—which are essentially the same: water, health, education, governance, and economic opportunities—and is broadcast in Arabic and Tamacheq, the language spoken by Touaregs," he added. ★

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Ecuador Reserve Protects Condors and Bears While It Is Raising Local Income

QUITO, Ecuador—The Condor Bioreserve—home to the endangered Andean condor, spectacled bear—and hundreds of other bird, mammal, and amphibian species—is flourishing, nature conservationists say. Illegal hunting and fishing has dropped. Fewer intentionally set fires are destroying habitat. Communities, which struggled with how to deal with outsiders, and with a few community members who have been destructive to the nature around them, are



The Andean condor ranges over the Andes mountains from Venezuela to Chile. This condor was photographed in Ecuador, where about 80 live in the wild. Protecting the Andean grasslands and ensuring availability of food sources are vital to maintaining the condor's population and are key elements of the Condor Bioreserve.

now learning to work on earning income while also preserving their surroundings.

A partnership between USAID and The Nature Conservancy that is active across Latin America, Parks in Peril, has been focusing on the Condor reserve, and conservationists are seeing a change. The reserve, made up of six protected areas, is the primary water source for Ecuador's capital city of Quito.

The 2.1 million hectare Condor reserve had been threatened by the expansion of agriculture and cattle ranching. Poorly planned roads and diversion of water sources were harming sensitive aquatic systems in the reserve. And unsustainable forestry and hunting activities threatened endangered species.

The Parks in Peril program focused on protecting the core areas of the Condor reserve. It encourages private landowners to preserve native wildlife habitats and protect watersheds by limiting development in order to create corridors between protected areas. Ecological easements are also being set up with willing landowners in the Palugillo, Itulcachi, and Inga communities. The program also works with native Indian communities to protect their territories while maintaining their culture.

The program works with local municipalities to coordinate water resource management

and conservation. The Quito Water Fund, for instance, is funding projects in the Oyacachi, Antisana, and Pita watersheds. Interest from the Cayambe municipality in water conservation within and outside the reserve has spurred a cooperative agreement between the municipality and a project partner to manage and conserve parts of the Andean region in the Cayambe-Coca Reserve.

Two communities concerned about resource degradation, Sinangoé and Oyacachi, have completed resource management plans for their areas with help from Parks in Peril. In the Sinangoé Cofán community, for instance, people are co-managing their territory located within the Cayambe-Coca Reserve. Programs in several villages hire, train, and equip residents to be park rangers. Provided with guard stations, two-way radios, patrol vehicles, and newly acquired knowledge about habitat protection, residents learn techniques to reduce poaching, illegal logging, and fires.

Other training focuses on promoting ecotourism, where residents learn about economic opportunities from low-impact activities such as nature hikes, sport fishing, and camping. Because the project has regulated tourism, particularly from Quito, illegal hunting and fishing have been curtailed.

USAID is funding ecotourism studies in



CONDOR REGION. This map shows where the reserve protects condors and other animals.

the region, and research of the spectacled bear's habitat to help farmers identify less vulnerable locations for raising their livestock. Since the beginning of the year, bear attacks on cattle have declined.

Communities are increasingly realizing the benefits of ecotourism. In the community of Oyacachi, for instance, funds generated from tourism provide residents with additional income. To expand their impact within the community, the Oyacachi ecotourism funds are being matched by contributions from partner organizations. ★

For more information on the Parks in Peril program, visit parksinperil.org.

EUROPE AND EURASIA

Georgia Responds to Midwinter Fuel, Power Cuts

TBILISI, Georgia—In late January, major disruptions of power and heat hit this trans-Caucasus country during its coldest winter months. But instead of leading to months of cold and darkness, as the outages would have done in the past decade, services were restored within two days.

“Due to the rehabilitation work implemented over the last two years, the Georgian energy system managed to provide energy supply to the population on a scheduled basis, even after the electricity system took three major hits,” said Minister of Energy Nika Gilauri.

USAID has spent years working on improving Georgia's heating and power services. Its work proved successful when, on the morning of Jan. 22, two explosions blew up the principal electricity line and two gas pipelines that deliver energy from Russia. Several days later, extreme weather knocked out Georgia's major transmission line that brings power to Tbilisi from the country's western hydroelectric power stations. This led a main natural gas fired generator to “trip off,” damaging the unit enough to require days of repair work.

Most Georgians were left without gas or electricity. But only for two days.

“This wouldn't have happened even last winter,” said Dana Kenney, USAID's senior energy advisor in Georgia. “USAID projects have played a substantial role in

improving the reliability of Georgia's energy system. Our projects have helped Georgia's major electricity utility, the United Energy Distribution Company (UEDC), to control carefully and precisely where the energy should go—so that after the crisis, hospitals and other important buildings received energy first.”

Neglect of the energy sector after the collapse of the Soviet Union left Georgia's energy sector in shambles. There was limited maintenance, planning, and budgeting; a lack of attention to commercial investment and operational incentives; and little money for imports.

As a result, Georgia's energy system could not meet demand, leading to frequent outages. But the country has battled the problem and, with USAID support, service has steadily improved.

“Everyone is satisfied with power supply in my neighborhood,” said Nona Zhvania, a resident of a small village in western Georgia. “Even during heavy snow and bad weather conditions [this year], I and my neighbors have regular supply of electricity with only occasional interruptions.”

USAID has invested more than \$5 million in equipment, systems, and technical assistance to improve the management of energy transmission and distribution.

During the energy crisis, system managers reported how much easier it is to operate the

energy system now, due to increased coordination and control. Before, orders were ignored, sometimes at the influence of local officials, leading to shoddy service.

The Georgian government now understands the value of strategic planning, budgeting, forecasting, and investment prioritization, said Kenney.

The Ministry of Energy was assisted in developing a sound budget and, as a result, the Georgian government has been able to finance several new energy investments through revenues from privatization in the past year.

Increased resources for energy also are coming into the system as a result of the improved commercial performance of UEDC, which is being assisted under a USAID-financed management contract.

“The commercial reform of the utilities has allowed them to operate properly and this was largely what allowed Georgia to weather this energy crisis,” Kenney said.

To show its support of the energy sector's commercial reform, in February President Mikhail Saakashvili awarded 21 energy specialists from various Georgian utilities with the Medal

of Honor for their bravery and leadership during the energy crisis.

Three of the recipients were employees of the UEDC, and their salaries were financed by USAID. During the crisis, they had worked for seven days straight, often foregoing sleep in cold and inclement weather. ★



Georgians line up for kerosene in Tbilisi, Jan. 27, 2006, after the area's power network went down. Most of Georgia was already without electricity several days earlier after its pipeline from Russia exploded.

ASIA AND THE NEAR EAST

New Varieties of Vegetables in the Gobi Desert

DUNDGOBI, Mongolia—Mongolian families in the Gobi desert region are now growing vegetables in their khashaas, or yards, to diversify their diet and supply their families with an additional source of income.

These vegetable gardens began sprouting in part due to the efforts of Ch. Damba, a career agronomist turned agricultural activist, who believed that small-scale, rural vegetable production would increase incomes and reduce grazing pressure on the Gobi rangelands.

Mongolia's transition to a market economy after 1990 cut rural incomes. A breakdown in social and economic institutions hurt the 1.4 million rural people and created serious environmental problems. Electricity, heating, water supply, and medical services seriously deteriorated. In addition, grasslands were degraded, and major livestock losses took place between 1999 and 2002 due to harsh weather conditions.

"Most people think vegetables and other plants can't grow in the Gobi's soil. The fact is they just don't have enough experience," Damba said.

For his efforts to get Mongolians to plant greens and his innovative ideas for using local resources, Damba received the 2004 annual Social Entrepreneur Award from the USAID-funded Training, Advocacy, and

and Networking Project (TAN). The award recognizes individuals who provide social services in innovative ways to their communities.

A strong proponent of rural vegetable and fodder production, Damba has experimented with more than 100 types of vegetables in the past five years, determining the best varieties for the desert climate and soil conditions. He has trained and provided seeds to 1,100 families who now grow vegetables in their khashaas.

One herder trained by Damba fenced off 13 hectares of pastureland and planted fodder. His consultations with the Department of Nature and Environment and the Elderly Association led him to plant 1,000 trees.

In another case, Damba's work with youth organizations led to the creation of a school garden, where 100 students planted a variety of vegetables.

Damba won a cash prize of \$1,200 with the TAN award, which is allowing him to hit the airwaves and tell even more Mongolians why they should eat vegetables. On FM radio and local TV in his province, he has been addressing the need to combat desertification and promoting the idea of sustainable and self-reliant community development.

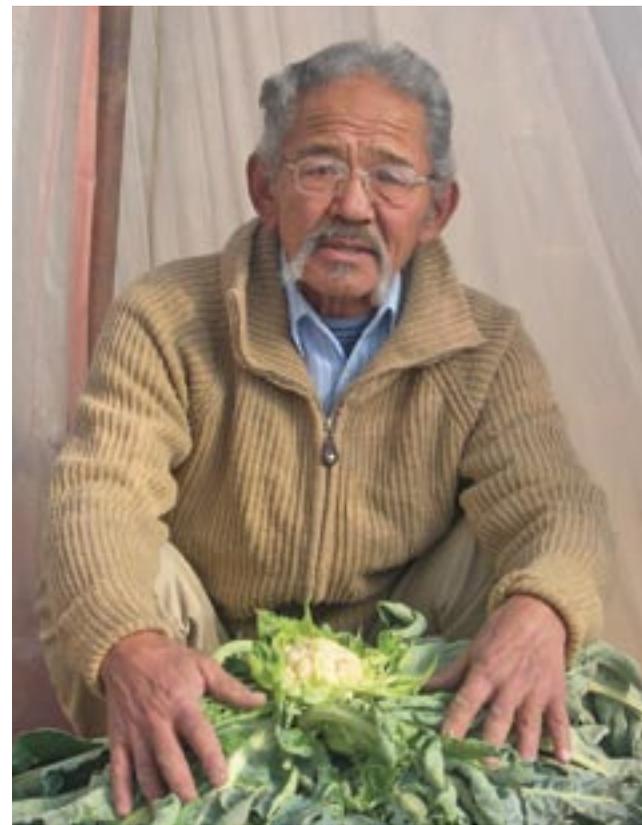
He has also collaborated with NGOs, local schools, and government bodies to

raise awareness and provide practical skills to the local community to start small-scale agriculture projects.

Damba says that everything depends on people's own motivation and initiative. "Self-help is the approach behind everything I do; it is the main principle for achieving all life's goals," he said.

Through the TAN project, USAID is helping rural communities bring about positive social changes, said former TAN Project Manager Silas Everett.

"Although certain factors for desertification are outside the control of Gobi's inhabitants, social entrepreneurs like Ch. Damba prove that one person can strengthen civil society's capacity to mitigate negative impacts of human behaviors," Everett said. "USAID's TAN project is helping local people to find local solutions for a healthier society." ★



Ch. Damba, an agronomist turned agricultural activist, is teaching Mongolians how to plant vegetables. For his efforts, Damba received the 2004 annual Social Entrepreneur Award from the USAID-funded Training, Advocacy, and Networking Project.

AFRICA

A Caravan Across West Africa Highlights The Need to Eliminate AIDS Stigma

A caravan to fight stigma and discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS in West Africa kicked off Nov. 4 in Nouakchott, Mauritania, and rolled to an end at Abuja, Nigeria, on Dec. 4, in time for an international conference on AIDS and sexually transmitted infection.

The Cross-border Caravan 2005 went through Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Nigeria to get people talking about the disease affecting several million people throughout West Africa.

This caravan was formed after organizations that work on HIV/AIDS, including

religious leaders, met in Dakar in August. The ministers, imams, and priests are considered key to reducing discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS and encouraging support for them.

By the end of the route, 1,500 religious leaders had been contacted and trained. Another 30,000 people joined the various caravan stops—from 300 in Nigeria to 8,400 in Mali—for sensitization sessions where they learned some of the facts—and crushed some of the myths—about people with HIV/AIDS.

The caravan set up camp for a day in each of the cities and towns along the route. It included religious leaders, people living with HIV/AIDS, leaders of various groups, and journalists. USAID staffers joined the caravan at several stops as well. Each program included a mix of lectures, trainings for religious leaders, and question-and-answer sessions.

Though a few religious leaders in some of the six countries had spoken out about discrimination that people with HIV/AIDS face, the caravan encouraged more of them to join the effort.

"As religious leaders, the synergy of the caravan has not only redoubled our spirit of collaboration, but it has also increased our respective expectations of a more effective fight against HIV/AIDS," said Imam Sani Isah of Nigeria.

In the 19 countries USAID supports through its West Africa Regional Program, more than 6 million people are living with HIV/AIDS, according to statistics from 2003. Health and other officials continue to be concerned that cross-border realities—transportation routes, migration, and refugee movements, for example—could help spread the disease among high-risk populations and then on to the general population.

People with HIV are often shunned by family members, employers, and strangers. They are considered bad people being punished by God for their deeds and behavior. For many, HIV/AIDS is not to be discussed.

The caravan's objective was to change those attitudes. In addition to the participants, people were exposed to the caravan's message through heavy media coverage in newspapers and on radio and television. The launching ceremony in Nouakchott, Mauritania, was hosted by two government ministers in the presence of 150 high religious leaders, as well as national and international media.

Partners in the cross-border caravan include the Regional Network of Religious Leaders; AWARE-HIV/AIDS; the national AIDS control offices in Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Nigeria; USAID's West Africa Regional Program; and other groups. ★



Leaders of the cross-border caravan show solidarity with people living with HIV/AIDS in Mali during one of the sessions in the month-long event.

Achieving Stability in Senegal Hinges on Building Peace in Casamance Region

DAKAR, Senegal—Senegal is counting on its political stability in a volatile region, and its sound investment climate, to speed up economic growth and reduce poverty among the country's 11 million people.

However, if the population keeps growing at its current 2.6 percent rate, the economy will have to grow at a 7.5 percent rate over a decade to cut poverty rates in half.

Capital: Dakar

Population: 11.1 million
(July 2005 est.)

Size: Slightly smaller than
South Dakota

Population below poverty line: 54% (2001 est.)

GDP per capita, or PPP: \$1,800 (2005 est.)

GDP real growth rate: 6.1% (2005 est.)

Life expectancy: 56 years

Ethnic groups: Wolof 43.3%, Pular 23.8%,
Serer 14.7%, Jola 3.7%, Mandinka 3%,
Soninke 1.1%, European and Lebanese 1%,
other 9.4%

Languages: French (official), Wolof, Pulaar, Jola,
Mandinka

Religions: Muslim 94%, indigenous beliefs 1%,
Christian 5% (mostly Roman Catholic)

Source: CIA World Factbook and USAID/Senegal



USAID's \$33.5 million budget for 2006 in Senegal will cover activities in economic growth, health, education, and peacebuilding in the southern Casamance region.

"Senegal stands out among countries in West Africa because of its political stability and leadership in African affairs," said Mission Director Oliver Carduner. "But it also must work to build investor confidence through greater transparency in its procurement systems, its judiciary, and its customs service.

"Our ability to address democracy and governance issues effectively is key to the success of all our programs."

For example, USAID/Senegal is working to ensure that health committees publicly disclose how clinics spend their budgets and that timber cutting rights are awarded fairly and openly.

USAID is also working with the Senegalese government to address governance issues in the southern Casamance region, which—while the country's most fertile area—is caught up in a 23-year separatist rebellion. Both sides of the conflict have asked the mission to support peacebuilding activities, such as training in negotiation skills needed to get peace nego-



tiations on track. Since 2000, USAID has assisted people living in and returning to the Casamance. The mission helped create more than 6,500 jobs. It built homes, classrooms, and local health facilities. According to Carduner, without lasting peace in the

Casamance, Senegal's "drive for development is likely to falter." ★

Richard Nyberg of USAID/Senegal wrote this collection of articles.

Farmers Learn New Production Methods

KOUSSANAR, Senegal—Beating a quick rhythm, three women raise enormous pestles over their heads and drive them with a heavy

thud into mortars full of fonio grains. It will take more than three hours to pound, winnow, and wash three kilograms of fonio.



Left to right, Ellen Samura, Sira Samura, and Meta Camara pound the nutritious fonio grain in Boula Téné, a village of 200 people. USAID/Senegal works to improve fonio processing, saving time and increasing profits for a small export industry mostly driven by women.

This scene is common in Senegal's southeastern Tambacounda region, home to about 530,000 people, most of whom are subsistence farmers and cattle or goat herders. Fonio is a common crop here that thrives even in the area's poor soil. But fonio, similar to couscous, is also increasingly sought after as a regional delicacy.

It is often served with a peanut sauce or chicken stew. Rich in amino acids and gluten free, it is easy to digest and low in natural sugars, making it an ideal food for the sick or diabetic.

With support from USAID/Senegal, farming communities like the one in Koussanar are working together to boost production and meet growing demand. Local farmers are even trying to export to new specialty markets in Europe and the United States.

Since 2003, a five-year, \$11.75 million project in the southern half of Senegal has organized a network of fonio farmers to increase production and improve fonio processing.

Last September, for instance, USAID supplied a farmers' network at Dindéfelo, near the country's southern border, with a machine to separate the grain from its hull. Adama Awa Suwaré, president of the committee in charge of the machine, said: "It used to take me five hours to transform three kilograms of fonio. With the machine, it only takes five minutes."

USAID is working with more than 2,000 producer groups and family enterprises. Aside from fonio, the Agency supports projects related to karaya gum for use in

the pharmaceutical industry, local fruits like jujube and madd, and honey.

In Koussanar, a town of about 2,000 people that lies 30 miles west of the regional capital, Tambacounda, dozens of groups harvest karaya gum, baobab fruit, jujube, and fonio. Brought together by USAID-funded efforts, these communities work with local administrative and national forest department officials to establish rules governing the use of the forested areas, and set up fines for damaging vines and trees or setting bushfires.

In late January, USAID trained 64 men chosen by their local development committees in 31 villages in the Koussanar area as forest guards. They now enforce the local forest code that was drafted with the help of the USAID project's team.

Koussanar is the seventh community where USAID has worked alongside residents and authorities to draft local conventions on resource use.

"A key objective is to get community members working with local and national authorities so they can develop forest management plans," said Peter Trenchard of USAID/Senegal. "This will provide them the legal basis to manage and profit from the products in a sustainable manner."

Exports of karaya gum more than tripled last year to over 140 tons, with an increase in revenue of 430 percent. Likewise, production of a lucrative "instant" baobab powder for juice increased from about a quarter ton in 2004 to 5.5 tons in 2005. ★

Religious Leaders Spread Word on Health Issues

KAFFRINE, Senegal—Imam Habib Thiam looks up as another Muslim community leader from across town enters his room to discuss a woman's medical problem that kept him up all night.

Women's health has become more of an issue to Thiam, who has decided to take life-saving messages to the mosque.

Thiam is just one imam who is talking to his community about health issues since par-

ticipating in a USAID-funded workshop last November. Now he often addresses health issues affecting women at public gatherings like weddings, funerals, baptisms, prayers, and religious holidays.

Thiam discovered through the USAID workshop that some 15,000 Senegalese mothers were likely to die between 2001 and 2007, many of them young girls who bleed to death giving birth because of poor medical care.

"This is 10 times the number of people who drowned on the Joola ferry," he said, referring to a ferry that sank off the Atlantic coast in 2002 and is considered the greatest national tragedy in living memory. "I don't even dare contemplate the magnitude of it."

The day after the meeting, the imam preached at the mosque next to his home, bringing in a nurse from the nearest health post to discuss the importance of birth spacing and maternal health issues.

USAID has invested about \$120,000 in efforts to inform religious leaders of reproductive health issues and the risks of HIV/AIDS. This includes printing information kits in Arabic and the most widely spoken local language, Wolof, outlining what Islam says about birth spacing.

More than 90 percent of Senegalese are Muslim; about 5 percent are Christian.

"Islam forces no one to have a dozen children," said Bashir Niass, Arabic teacher at the Waldiodio Ndiaye High School in Kaolack and regional coordinator of the local USAID-assisted Islam and Population Network. "Marriage in Islam is conditional. If you have the means, you can get married. At a minimum, you must have a small house and enough money to support your wife and

your children," he said.

"Islam does not reject birth spacing," added Niass, who accompanies the USAID team during presentations to religious communities. "Everyone knows that birth spacing is a necessity now."

Religious leaders are also urging their congregation members to be in faithful relationships in order to avoid infectious diseases.

"It's not the condom that is bad—it is wrong to have sex outside marriage," said Abdou Aziz Kébé, an Islamic scholar with the Islam and Population Network.

Preliminary results from a USAID-supported demographic and health survey last year put national contraceptive prevalence rate at 10 percent—indicating limited access to family planning services.

Last year the Agency supported reproductive health dialogue sessions with more than 30,000 people, focusing on fidelity and women's rights, and the number and spacing of children. USAID also supported 600 sessions on reproductive health issues using a lifeskills manual. These sessions were attended by nearly 6,000 youth, more than half of them women.

The Agency has worked with 3,500 religious youth leaders, who were issued faith-based life skills manuals in Arabic.

"The religious nature of our lifeskills training has greater impact," said Louise-Anne Ciss, a Catholic member of the Coalition of Religious Youth Organizations against HIV/AIDS. "We have to communicate with religious youth on the basis of faith. During the training, some people didn't believe HIV/AIDS existed. Now they do." ★



Imam Habib Thiam, second from right, explains to members of the religious community in Kaffrine, Senegal, that Islam supports women's health and a healthy family life.

Richard Nyberg, USAID/Senegal

Education Quality, Enrollment Rises in Senegal

MAKA, Senegal—Sana Ly walks 30 minutes from her home in Colibantan to her new middle school in the nearby village of Maka. Although the distance is a hike, Ly and her friends in this dusty, rural area of south-eastern Senegal consider themselves lucky to be able to carry on their studies.

Elementary school is the highest available education level for many children in Senegal, where public schools are a rare sight in rural areas. Many parents cannot afford to send their children to school in nearby cities, so teenagers often work on family farms instead of going to school.

A five-year, \$20 million education program is increasing middle school enrollment and improving the quality of education. It is assisting the Senegalese government with its goal to provide each child at least 10 years of education.

Social pressures to leave school are particularly intense for young girls in communities like Maka. By the time they reach Ly's age, 17, they could be married and possibly pregnant. Parents in rural areas often do not support girls' desire for education. At Ly's school, for example, there are currently 121 students: 91 boys and only 30 girls.

"We are trying to make the parents aware of the need to send their girls to school," said principal Pape Djibril Bathily. "But in a farming community like this one, working the soil brings economic capital."

More than a quarter of Senegalese girls will never learn to read or write, and only 16 percent of teachers in Senegal are women. Some of them, like their male counterparts, still instruct under trees.

But USAID is helping improve education conditions. With communities contributing one-fourth of the overall costs such as electricity, construction material, water, and labor, USAID has helped build 18 schools and rehabilitated eight others in Senegal's Fatick, Kolda, and Tambacounda regions for use during the 2005–06 academic year.

Each new school includes four classrooms, a library, a science laboratory, a computer room, a principal's office, a room for teachers, and separate bathrooms for girls and boys.

Built in rural areas, these schools helped increase enrollment by 28 percent last year.

USAID is also offering scholarships to help girls earn an education. Ly is one of 1,000 young girls from three regions

to benefit from a scholarship under the Africa Education Initiative (AEI), a U.S. Presidential Initiative.

Through a public-private partnership with SONATEL, Senegal's major telecommunications company, another 100 scholarships were awarded to poor high school girls.

Additional Agency projects have printed new textbooks and trained teachers how to better engage their students. School principals have also been helped to better manage their schools. ★

Sana Ly, a girls' scholarship recipient, looks over her notes in the new middle school classroom financed by USAID in the rural community of Maka.



Richard Nyberg, USAID/Senegal

January 22, 2006–March 4, 2006

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REASSIGNED

Christine Adamczyk

Egypt/HRH to DCHA/DG/CS

Cheryl A. Anderson

Eritrea/D to Haiti/PHN

Robert L. Arellano

Haiti/FM to COMP/FS

Felix N. Awantang

Senegal/HPN to WARP

Kenneth L. Barberi

Afghanistan/OAA to COMP/FS

Bradley Bessire

COMP/NE/OJT to CA/DM

Cathy J. Bowes

Angola to Pakistan/OD

Susan Bradley

DCHA/FFP/EP to DCHA/PPM

Caroline B. Brearley

O/S LANG TRNG to El Salvador/SO1

Alvin A. Brown

OIG/A/FA to OIG/MCC/FA

Arthur W. Brown

COMP/LWOP to COMP/FS

Ronald Carlson

EGAT/UP to EGAT/PR/UP

Briera B. Dale

COMP/DRI to EGAT/AG/AM

Aman S. Djahanbani

COMP/FS to M/OAA/OD

Audrey M. Doman

E&E/MO/FS to LAC/SPO

Joe S. Duncan

EGAT/I&E/ES to EGAT/I&E

Edward P. Encarnacion

M/CFO/WFS to M/CFO/CAR

Laurel K. Fain

COMP/NE/OJT to CA/HP

Martin Fischer

COMP/FS to M/OAA/CAS

William F. Fuller

M/CFO/FPS to M/CFO/WFS

Anne C. Gaven

COMP/NE/OJT to RS Africa/SO3 HEA

Kent R. Hill

AA/E&E to AA/GH

Michael F. Hoebel

M/CFO/CAR to M/FM/CAR

Gilbert S. Jackson

EGAT/I&E/ES to EGAT/I&E/E

Andrew R. Johnson

COMP/NE/OJT to Honduras/DP

Sonya Y. Johnson

PPC/RA/SBI to GC/AMS

Margaret S. Kline

M/OAA/DCHA to Afghanistan/OAA

Marie C. Laurent

DCHA/FFP/PTD to COMP/FSLT

Jeffrey A. Lehrer

O/S LANG TRNG to El Salvador/SO1

Jon Daniel Lindborg

Indonesia/OD to PHIL/D

Miguel A. Luina

COMP/FS to M/CFO/FPS

Yvette N. Malcioln

Madagascar/POP to COMP/FS

Jeanetta A. Marshall

M/CFO/FS to M/CFO/APC

Kevin D. McGlothlin

COMP/NE/OJT to Indonesia/OD

Mikaela S. Meredith

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John P. Nicholson

Egypt/FM to Afghanistan/OFM

Jonathan Palmer

M/OAA/GRO to Egypt/PROC

Anne Patterson

Indonesia/BHS to WB/Gaza

John Michael Phee

RIG/Manila to OIG/AIG/MCC

Leonel T. Pizarro

COMP/FS to M/OAA/DCHA

Curtis A. Reintsma

Africa/EA to Africa/SP

Thomas E. Rhodes

O/S LANG TRNG to Ecuador/SDE

John T. Rifenshank

EGAT/AG/ARPG to EGAT/AG/ATGO

Susan K. Riley

Haiti/EG to COMP/LWOP

Luis A. Rivera

COMP/NE/OJT to Peru/D

Rebecca J. Rohrer

Nepal/HFP to Jamaica-CAR/CRP

Kimberly A. Rosen

COMP/FS to EGAT/PR/MD

Mike E. Sarhan

Eritrea/D to USAID Rep/Yemen

Nancy M. Shalala

Iraq/HEO to Iraq/GO

Richard Steelman

ANE/IR to ANE/SA

D. Ben Swartley

COMP/NE/OJT to Haiti/EG

Jessica R. Tulodo

Indonesia/DDG to EGAT/PR/UP

Nicole Ann Uzzle

M/IRM/CPFM to M/PMO/BEA

Kenneth Bruce Wiegand

Colombia to DROC

Joseph C. Williams

M/HR/TE to ANE/EAA

Terry Hill Williams

LPA/CL to AFR/EA

Francisco J. Zamora

GH/HIDN/ID to GH/HIDN/MCH

RETIRED

Cecelia C. Barksdale**Cecelia Y. Burks****Gerald A. Cashion****Linda Cope****Lorraine Y. Johnson****Thomas L. McClanahan****Joseph J. Pastic**

Malaria Expert Mary Ettling Dies

Mary Ettling, 57, died Feb. 25 in Seattle, Wash. A USAID employee between 1998 and 2005, Ettling was an internationally recognized scientist and malaria specialist who focused on work in Africa.

"Mary Ettling was crafted out of precious metal with a golden heart. She understood and loved Africa," said Dr. Aggrey J. Oloo of the World Health Organization (WHO), Regional Office for Africa. Ettling's USAID colleagues and friends voiced similar views.

Wendy Benezerga of USAID/Madagascar, said: "Mary's first visit to Madagascar launched the U.S. government...into the fight against malaria in this country and we continue the good work she began here. In her memory we will redouble, make that triple, our efforts to prevent and treat malaria, saving women's and children's lives."

Ettling graduated from Radcliffe College in 1970, in social anthropology and Asian culture, before completing a master of science degree at the Harvard School of Public Health. She then went to Thailand and worked as a Peace Corps volunteer and as principal investigator with the Thai Ministry of Health's malaria division. In 1988, Ettling returned to Harvard to complete a Doctor of Science degree.

Over the next decade, she worked on battling malaria in Vietnam, Malawi, Nepal, Zambia, Indonesia, and Cambodia. Ettling's expertise and approach to problem solving used methodologies from the fields of epidemiology, economics, and behavioral science as well as traditional malariology and vector control.

Ettling joined USAID in 1998 as the senior public health advisor for infectious diseases and malaria in the Africa bureau. Three years later she became the leader of the Malaria Team within the Bureau for Global Health, a post she held until retirement in 2005.

She also served as one of four malaria experts on the Technical Review Panel of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.

Dr. Antoine Kabore, director for HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria with WHO in Africa said, "We celebrate her legacy of compassion, commitment, and competence and send our deepest sympathy to her family for a great life given to the needs of those who suffer, and a great gift received by a people who will never forget what she did." ★

John Paul Clark contributed to this article.

MOVED ON

Retta B. Burden**Juan E. Calvo****Roger Dale Carlson****Gilbert Collins****Paul R. Deuster****Daniel Y. Green****Mosi K. McCrary****Thomas F. Miller****Enger A. Muteteke****Carlos E. Pascual****Dale Pfeiffer****Lisa K. Povolni****Peter E. Schulleri****Willie D. Smith****Dianne Tsitsos****Susan M. Williams**

IN MEMORIAM

Boubacar Adamou, 44, died March 3 in Washington, D.C. Adamou worked for USAID for more than 20 years, serving during the past six years as the supervisory voucher examiner in USAID/Guinea. He also had tours of duty at the missions in Caucasus and Ivory Coast. He spent most of the beginning of his USAID career working on financial management support issues in his homeland at USAID/Niger before that mission closed. Due to outstanding service, Adamou had recently been awarded a Special Immigrant Visa to come to the United States with his family. He arrived in the United States days before his death.

Walter J. Sherwin, 74, died Jan. 18 in Bethesda, Md. Sherwin joined USAID in 1965 and began his foreign assignments in French-speaking West Africa—Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), Madagascar, and Senegal. He came back to Washington for seven years before returning to Africa for work in Niger and Guinea. In each of his country assignments, Sherwin worked to

coordinate and oversee projects dealing with forestry, clean water, health, livestock, and agriculture. After retiring from USAID in 1986, Sherwin did consulting work for private groups working on overseas projects with the Agency. After volunteering for many years with Reading for the Blind and Dyslexic, which records textbooks for students in the United States, Sherwin attempted to create a similar program in Senegal. He had prepared a grant and met with Dakar education leaders before becoming ill. Interested coworkers and friends have said they will pursue the endeavor in his memory.

Ray Solem, 62, died Jan. 4 in Washington, D.C. A former foreign service officer, Solem joined USAID in 1968 as an international development intern and went on to serve in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Recife, Brazil; and Tegucigalpa, Honduras. He continued with the Agency as program analyst until retiring in 1996. After his retirement, Solem renovated historic homes in Georgetown and headed up his own real estate firm. ★

Comments, corrections, submissions, and suggestions for *FrontLines* are welcomed and should be sent by email to frontlines@usaid.gov; by mail to USAID, Ronald Reagan Building, Suite 6.10-020, Washington, D.C. 20523-6100; or by fax to 202-216-3035.

Agency Officials Receive Afghanistan Honor

Two USAID/Afghanistan health officers were awarded Afghanistan's highest civilian honor last month for their work in helping develop the country's public health sector.

James E. Sarn, USAID's social sector reform office director, and James L. Griffin, a senior health advisor, were each presented the Mir Masjidi Khan's medal by Mohammad Zahir Shah, the former king of Afghanistan, during a Feb. 18 ceremony at the palace.

The awards honor their dedication and outstanding job performances. A message from President Hamid Karzai also noted their major roles in reconstructing the health sector, building health clinics, and providing health services in 13 provinces.

"Jim Sarn and Jim Griffin are true professionals, and this award recognizes the long hours of work and tireless efforts they have put into the USAID/Afghanistan health program," said USAID/Afghanistan Mission Director Alonzo Fulgham. "Working for two years far from their families, their work has provided basic healthcare services, increased maternal and neonatal care, and improved lives for thousands of Afghan families.

"The foundation for healthcare they have established, and which is recognized by the award, will serve as a basis for future improvements in the health of the Afghan people for years to come."

USAID has provided \$50 million in grants to improve Afghanistan's public health system since the fall of the Taliban. Over 7 million people now have better access to health services and about 340,000 people a month get health and counseling services through the Ministry of Public Health. USAID programs have also helped train thousands of doctors, nurses, midwives, and other medical professionals.

Sarn's office focuses on programs in health, education, youth, and gender, with projects—including rehabilitation and reconstruction of more than 900 schools and clinics—accommodating nearly 300,000 students and serving 340,000 patients per month.

"Without the strong leadership of the minister of public health, Dr. [Sayed Mohammad Amin] Fatimie, our collaborative programs with the government of Afghanistan would not have been able to achieve the current level of impact, particularly the population coverage and the quality of services," he said.

Griffin, who oversees the mission's healthcare work, including health personnel training, basic health service delivery, infectious disease surveillance, and hospital management, added that the award was unexpected.

"This is a great honor for me. This award signifies the great work done by my coun-



USAID's James Griffith (left) and James Sarn (right) show medals they received from the former king of Afghanistan for their work on that country's public health sector. In the center is Dr. Faiz, USAID health program management specialist.

terparts at the Ministry of Public Health and the entire USAID/Afghanistan team—not just me," he said. "I could not do the work that I do without dedicated people at the

Ministry of Public Health and the support and assistance of many people in the Afghanistan mission." ★

Workplace Seminars Foster Staff Harmony

Want to learn how to win an argument at work? Or why it seems that men and women communicate so differently on the job? Or just what your responsibilities are as an employee or supervisor in helping maintain harmony in the office?

Since September 2005, USAID's Office of the Agency Counselor has been offering the seminar "Fostering Workplace Harmony" to management and staff at Agency headquarters in Washington and in missions overseas. Partner organizations overseas can participate as well.

The program is designed to help bring work units closer together, says Bishop Buckley, who leads the seminars and has a long history of working on employee issues in and outside of USAID.

The program has three primary goals:

- create opportunities for work units to explore the key issues associated with workplace harmony and disharmony
- strengthen work unit cohesion
- put in place a plan to ensure the office maintains workplace harmony after the sessions are over

"We are all facing increasing pressures to do more work with fewer resources, while increasing our daily interactions with colleagues and partners," Buckley said. "We face more stressful deadlines, workplace demands on our personal time, and at the same time have to cope with the uncertainty caused by shifting organizational structures and changing priorities."

USAID's international and multicultural workforce presents some unique challenges as well, he added.

Workplace conflict, by the way, is normal, says Buckley. It's when coworkers ignore conflict that serious problems arise.

"When ignored, the conflict escalates and grows, almost like a fungus, and it becomes contagious, spreading throughout the office or workplace," Buckley explained. "Ignoring workplace conflict or disagreements will not make them go away."

Not every office manager that contacts the counselor's office for the seminar is having difficulties. For them, the workshops are like "preventive maintenance" to ensure workplace harmony during times of uncertainty, Buckley said.

The program has three stages. In the first, Buckley meets with the mission director or the head of the office or bureau to discuss the expectations for the seminar. He also conducts 15-minute pre-seminar interviews with managers and nonsupervisory staff to be sure the information he presents during the seminar is relevant to their organizational needs.

The second stage is the main event: a four-hour seminar involving up to 25 people

per session. The initial seminar is for the management/supervisory team.

The final stage happens after the seminars end. Buckley conducts consultation sessions for individuals from the main group who ask for more advice and information. This is also the stage where Buckley meets with the office heads to go over specific suggestions they can use to improve the work environment and maintain the momentum from the seminar.

David Ostermeyer, USAID's deputy chief financial officer, gives the seminar high marks. "Much like other management theories that focus on positive reinforcement, 'Fostering Workplace Harmony' uses real chips to reinforce the concept. Everyone is encouraged to remember their chips on a daily basis and provide thanks and reinforcing words to encourage colleagues and build office morale," he said.

"The sessions also introduce management theory to staff so that they are aware that their managers are people too, and therefore need their own reinforcement from bosses and staff," Ostermeyer added.

Vikki Carethers, a human resources assistant, says she came away from her class enlightened. "It makes you aware of the pitfalls supervisors and employees can fall into," she said. "I learned that communication in and of itself is a fantastic tool, and that folks listen differently and interpret differently."

For more information about the seminars or to schedule a session, contact Buckley at bbuckley@usaid.gov or at 202-712-1963. ★



USAID's Bishop Buckley, standing, makes a point during a recent "Fostering Workplace Harmony" seminar for workers in the Agency's human resources office.

Iraq Mission Director Dawn Liberi Tells Foreign Press about \$5.1 Billion in U.S. Aid

The \$5.1 billion in American aid programs in Iraq carried out by USAID are helping to defeat the insurgency, helping the government of Iraq to build a unified government effective at the local and national level, and helping Iraqis to expand their economic base, said Mission Director Dawn Liberi recently.

"Iraq relies on oil for the majority of its revenue but that doesn't produce a lot of jobs, so we're focused on helping expand the non-oil economy and build a market economy base," Liberi told reporters Feb. 24, at the Foreign Press Center in Washington.

Of \$21 billion in U.S. aid to Iraq, USAID has been responsible for \$5.1 billion spent on 12,000 projects in all 18 provinces, she said. About half of the projects provided essential services and improved infrastructure; the other half promoted development: health, education, humanitarian assistance, and agriculture.

Vaccinations of children under age 5 cut measles and other diseases, and kept the country polio free. U.S. assistance also helped restore over 1,000 megawatts of power.

"We've also been involved in helping to restore water supply to several million people, as well as helping to focus on water and sewage," she said.

The Agency helped establish the Electoral Commission in Iraq, which ran three elections during the past year. It trained 15,000 domestic monitors and poll agents, and helped publicize the constitution. This helped voting turnout rise from 7 to 12 million, Liberi said.

Aid programs also support civil society and the Iraq independent media and news agency. Civil society is seen as key to helping the Iraqi government overcome many ethnic and sectarian issues.

"We work through about 1,300 local Iraqi nongovernmental organizations and civil society organizations and the majority of our programs are carried out by Iraqis," Liberi said.

On the economic side, USAID helped the Iraqi government establish an investment promotion agency and revitalize the business registry, which allows firms to get more information on credit, marketing, and internet access and to understand world pricing. Over 30,000 Iraqi businesses were registered in the past six months.

To improve literacy, USAID is helping the Ministry of Education train more than 100,000 teachers, publish more than 8 million new textbooks, and enroll more than 14,000 students in an accelerated learning program.

The Agency provides assistance to persons suddenly displaced by conflict or natural disaster. More than 300,000 Iraqis have benefited from such assistance. And to support effective government, the Agency is providing training for many provincial council members and ministerial level officials.

Since "Iraq was actually one of the breadbaskets of the Middle East," she said, USAID is helping to increase production of dates and to reclaim productive marshland areas that had been drained by Saddam Hussein.



Workers lay cable as part of the expansion of a water treatment plant in Sharq-Dijla, Iraq. The work was completed in May 2005, increasing the city's supply of potable water by about 50 million gallons per day.

"We've helped to increase wheat production. On test plots in three governorates, we've demonstrated a 40 percent average increase in wheat yield using a cost-effective

technical package. In 2004 to 2005, national wheat production increased by six percent," she said. ★

Natsios and Kolbe Discuss the Future of U.S. Foreign Assistance

Former USAID Administrator Andrew S. Natsios told a public meeting recently that changes to the structure of the U.S. foreign aid agency and a shift of U.S. diplomats from Europe to the developing countries, will be "far more important than they appear to be."

"The Third World was clearly part of the Cold War, but it was a secondary level of interest—it was not at the center of our vital national interests," Natsios told the Council on Foreign Relations on Feb. 28 in Washington.

"What the secretary [of state Condoleezza Rice] essentially announced a few weeks ago was that the locus of American vital national interests has profoundly shifted away from Europe."

Speaking alongside Rep. Jim Kolbe, R-Ariz., chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Natsios said: "If, in fact, the locus of our vital national interest is shifting geographically, it's also shifting institutionally away from the nation-state."

Natsios, who is now a distinguished professor in the practice of diplomacy and an adviser on international development at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, said that

"real" threats to the United States are "the criminal drug cartels, which are tied in with terrorist networks, which are tied in with international illegal arms markets, which are tied in to money-laundering rings and human trafficking rings."

He called this "the darker side of globalization."

Natsios also noted that major development success came in countries on the border of the former Soviet bloc. He said that the threat of domination by former or current communist powers such as Russia and China was so great it forced their smaller, newly independent neighbors to institute reforms that made development successful.

In addition, since the United States

believed its interests were affected by what happened in those former socialist regions, it offered not just foreign aid but diplomatic and even military support as well.

Kolbe told the meeting that the shift in U.S. diplomacy toward the developing world announced by Rice was "long overdue."

"But I think some of the other things that are suggested in there—the moving around of accounts and so forth, I'm not too sure how much of that is going to really have a great impact."

"There's no question that our foreign assistance programs are highly fractured and divergent and, in some ways, not very coherent... we have them in USAID, but we have a lot of it in the State Department, and increasingly we see pieces of it over here in Defense. We have the Centers for Disease Control under HHS that has a little piece of this.

"And so you have pieces of foreign assistance that are everywhere now in the government, and there isn't a very coherent direction to it. And I think that's the important thing about having a [deputy] secretary of state that can provide some overall guidance for that."

Kolbe noted concern that U.S. foreign assistance might be shifted "away from the kind of long-term thinking of development

assistance and poverty reduction that is supposed to be the mission of USAID."

He said that instead, American foreign aid could be shifted into what he called "State Department thinking—what is in the national interest right now, what is it that our security interests are concerned about."

The Arizona Republican said the Bush administration had boosted foreign aid through its \$15 billion AIDS program and the \$5 billion per year Millennium Challenge Corporation plan. "And both of those have been outside of the structure of USAID," he said.

He also asked how Congress can "maintain support in the country" for a growing foreign aid budget, noting that "development assistance and child assistance programs have doubled in the last six years."

Kolbe said, development assistance needs to be "sustainable itself," and he called for working "outside the traditional box...of little programs that we have done through USAID that have been spent in different countries and have had only marginal impact in the long-term."

"In the end we have to talk about opening markets—we have to talk about allowing these countries to have access to our markets," he concluded. ★

"What the secretary [of state Condoleezza Rice] essentially announced a few weeks ago was that the locus of American vital national interests has profoundly shifted away from Europe."

—Andrew S. Natsios

Afghan Farmers Are Switching Crops

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improve their legal farming.

To help Afghan farmers shift away from opium poppies, USAID spent \$150 million in 2004 and 2005 on “alternate livelihoods” to provide other ways to earn a decent living.

As Zarin and a half-dozen of his neighbors sit in the house that opium money built, the

elderly farmer peers through his thick eyeglasses and tells a visitor that the wheat seed and urea fertilizer he got, through a U.S. aid project, were just a start.

And even if he had enough seed for all his land, and the 400-year-old canal vital to wheat farming in his village were fixed—winter flooding damaged the intake—wheat will never bring as much cash as opium.

Badakshan province was the third largest opium producer in recent years after Helmand and Nangahar. But it also showed the biggest drop in production in 2004 and 2005—along with Nangahar—after Karzai and strong provincial leaders urged people to obey the law. But there was growing concern in early 2006 that many farmers might either shift back to poppy or else grow it in remote fields far from the roads.

The Afghan government was beginning to use tractors to plow under any fresh poppy it found in the hope that farmers would be persuaded to end its cultivation. “We really want to stop growing poppy,” said Zarin.

However, his neighbors, sitting on carpets inside an unheated room in his new house, said that unless local officials stopped growing poppies, poor farmers would find it hard to stop. The Afghan villagers say they don’t want to go back to living in damp, dark, cold houses with earthen floors, without electricity or access to healthcare.

“If you came here 10 years ago,” said Zarin, “there was not even a donkey to take a patient

to the hospital in Faisabad. Now we have a car to take someone to the hospital, even at 11 at night. If there were some companies that would set up factories, people would rather work and then no one will plant poppy.”

Among the ways U.S. aid helps farmers shift from poppies are:

- Some 250 kilometers of roads have been built, part of a wide plan to link remote farms to the bustling markets of Kabul, Mazar-e Sharif, and other cities.
- 500,000 farmers in all 34 provinces received improved wheat and vegetable seeds along with fertilizer.
- 200,000 Afghans were hired to repair 6,000 kilometers of irrigation channels damaged by neglect, war, or flooding.
- Livestock growers receive veterinary advice and treatment.

USAID and other aid agencies are also working with local officials here to establish a regional development plan and attract business investment. Items for consideration include:

- Improve mining of lapis lazuli, the speckled blue semiprecious stone for which Badakshan is renowned.
- Augment collection of herbs and nuts growing wild in the mountains.
- Dry vegetables and fruits for Afghan and regional markets.
- Open up formal border crossings with Pakistan, Tajikistan, and China for trade and tourism.
- Improve the quality and quantity of local wool production used in carpets and clothing.

“We all agree that it is a bad choice between growing poppy and being poor,” said one of Zarin’s neighbors. ★



At a meeting in Faisabad, Afghanistan, officials from the local government, business, NGOs, and USAID crafted plans to develop Badakshan province, one of the poorest in Asia. Four working groups each produced priorities; this man explains his group’s list.

Agency Scores A+ on Computer Security, Tops Government

USAID received an A+ grade on an annual survey of federal agencies’ computer security, coming in with the only perfect score of 100 among the 24 agencies surveyed in 2005.

The Computer Security Report Card, released March 16 by the House Government Reform Committee, had an average grade of D+. This was the same as last year. Aside from USAID, other agencies winning A+ were the Department of Labor, Social Security Administration, Office of Personnel Management, and Environmental Protection Agency. It was the same grade the Agency received in 2004—though the numerical score that year was 99.

John Streufert, acting chief information officer for the Agency, said: “For the second year in a row, USAID led the federal government in IT security in FY 2005. In FY 2004, USAID was the first and only Agency to have achieved

an A+; in FY 2005, USAID was the first and only organization scoring a perfect 100 of 100 points.

“We couldn’t be more pleased with the extraordinary Agency teamwork among missions and bureaus that this grade recognizes,” he added.

The annual report card is the result of the Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002, which aims to ensure that government computer systems are secure. The act requires agency chief information officers and inspectors general to compile information and report to the House committee each year.

The overall grade average was pulled down by the more than one dozen agencies that received low Ds and Fs. Among those getting Fs were the departments of Energy, Veterans Affairs, Health and Human Services, Interior, Defense, State, Homeland Security, and Agriculture. ★

Senate Confirms Tobias USAID Administrator

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show agencies are not working at cross-purposes in order to have a seat at the table where decisions are made.

Tobias, 64, said he took the job because “it is the honor of a lifetime.”

In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee earlier in March, he said: “As the global AIDS coordinator,

I have witnessed USAID’s work and its committed employees at their best, working tirelessly in some of the most difficult environments in the world.”

“We cannot turn our backs on the millions of children who succumb to starvation and disease each day, when

the ability to address it is in our hands,” he added.

Americans remain committed to feeding the world’s hungry and relieving suffering after the Tsunami, the Pakistan earthquake, and other disasters, he noted, but long-term development is more than humanitarian aid or charity.

“Development must engender fundamental changes in governance and institutions, human capacity, and economic structure, so that countries can sustain their further economic and social progress on their own,” he told the Senate. ★

“We cannot turn our backs on the millions of children who succumb to starvation and disease each day, when the ability to address it is in our hands.”

—Randall L. Tobias

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Liberia's Sirleaf, First Woman President in Africa, Addresses U.S. Congress



Liberia President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf attended a social function at the White House with President George W. Bush during a visit to the United States in March. Sirleaf also addressed a joint session of Congress, telling the members of Liberia's citizens: “Our dream has the size of freedom.”

Liberia's Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the first elected woman president of any African nation, visited the United States in March to address a joint session of the U.S. Congress and for a series of meetings with international development organizations. President Bush also hosted Sirleaf at a White House reception.

“It was the leadership of the 108th Congress, more than two years ago, that paved the way for a United Nations force that secured our peace and guaranteed free and fair elections,” she told Congress March 17.

“It was your \$445 million addition to a supplemental appropriations bill that attracted additional commitments from

international donors. With those funds, we have laid the foundation for a durable peace, not only in Liberia, but in the whole West African sub-region.”

Liberia was founded in 1820 by a small group of former slaves from the United States. After those founders, thousands of freed slaves followed and established settlements.

“Our special relationship with the United States brought us benefits long before the autumn of 2003,” she said. “Thousands of our people, including myself, have been educated in American missionary schools and gone on to higher training in this country,” she said. “But most of our people have not been as fortunate as I was.

“Always poor and underdeveloped, Liberia is only now emerging from two decades of turmoil that destroyed everything we managed to build in a century and a half of independence.”

From 1989 to the signing of the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in August 2003, over 250,000 of the country's 3 million people died and another million were driven from their homes, including hundreds of thousands who fled the country. Rape and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls were pervasive.

Over 80 percent of Liberia's population is illiterate and lives below the poverty line. The unemployment rate exceeds 70 percent.

During former President Charles Taylor's final years in power, USAID focused on health, agriculture, and peace-building. As the fighting entered Monrovia in 2003, U.S. and European relief activities kept many alive.

By 2004, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) deployed the world's largest UN peacekeeping force of 15,000 troops and 1,000 police.

Of the \$200 million in U.S. aid for Liberia's reconstruction voted by Congress, USAID distributed \$108 million; the State Department provided \$39 million; Defense provided \$35 million; and Treasury spent \$18.5 million.

In support of elections, USAID trained civil society organizations to educate voters and observe the voting; supported Liberia's National Elections Commission; strengthened political parties; and helped provide nation-wide coverage of the election process. ★

Notes from Schieck

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busy work: the program has created more than 3,000 jobs for ex-gangsters in El Salvador and sales of their products to stores in Central America, the United States, Canada, Germany, France, and Australia have hit \$1.87 million. Over the next several years, the program is expected to generate another \$3.8 million in product sales and provide jobs for an additional 4,750 people.

An integrated approach to combating gangs is essential, as it is the only way to bring a long-term solution to the problem. For the efforts of USAID and its partners to yield results, there must be prevention, intervention, and law enforcement.

Though the rest of the international community is just beginning to focus on the global impact of gangs, I am proud to see USAID taking a hard look at these issues and already stepping up to the challenge with a mixture of innovative and tried-and-true solutions. ★

Liberia Vice President Boakai

Liberia Vice President Joseph Boakai received help from USAID on his journey from one of six boys born to illiterate parents to the second-highest position in his country. After attending primary and high school in Sierra Leone and Liberia with support from his extended family, Boakai graduated from the College of West Africa in 1972 with a bachelor's degree in business administration. He then received a USAID fellowship to help continue his education, traveling to the United States and graduating from Kansas State University in 1976.

Boakai went on to jobs in both the public and private sector. He worked for the Liberia Produce Marketing

Corporation in the 1970s, then served as Liberia's minister of agriculture from 1983 to 1985. He later worked as a consultant to the World Bank in Washington and also founded a firm dealing in agricultural equipment and consultancy. He has served as board chairman of the Liberia Wood Management Corporation and of the Liberia Petroleum Refining Company.

Boakai personally financed and constructed a 6.9-mile road project connecting Foya Kama and Warsonga Village in Lofa County, where he was born. He also influenced the establishment of the Liberia Opportunity Industrialization Center there. ★

Indonesian Children to Get Sesame Street in 2007

JAKARTA, Indonesia—Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced an \$8.5 million partnership between USAID, the Sesame Workshop, and Indonesia to create a new Indonesian version of the popular children's television program Sesame Street during a March 14 visit here.

Speaking to students, teachers, and parents at the MakMuriyah madrassah during a March 14 visit, Rice said the Indonesian version of Sesame Street will help build a foundation for successful life-long learning for that country's children, as it has for children around the world. Rice was in the country on the second leg of a three-nation trip, which also included stops in Chile and Australia.

Indonesia's Sesame Street, to debut in 2007, will feature Indonesian Muppet characters, educational content reflecting Indonesia's values and cultural diversity, locally produced live action and animated films, and classic Sesame Street segments that have entertained children around the world for decades.

Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country, has a strong tradition in puppetry, which officials believe will provide an excellent platform for Sesame Street's approach. The television programs will address a major challenge in the Indonesian education sector since only a small number of children have access to early childhood education.

The USAID-Sesame Workshop partnership for Indonesia is part of USAID/Indonesia's broader \$157 million education

initiative, which is now working in 1,000 public and private schools to improve the quality of basic education. The program is expected to reach 9,000 schools by 2010.

USAID/Indonesia's Decentralized Basic Education (DBE) program is introducing more participatory teaching and learning techniques to increase student performance in math, science, and reading; assisting local governments to more effectively manage and deliver education services; and helping youth to obtain relevant work and life skills to better compete for jobs in the future. The mission has expanded the education initiative to meet long-term education needs in post-tsunami Aceh as well.

USAID Mission Director William M. Frej, said: "By improving school readiness in basic literacy and numeracy, the Indonesian Sesame Street program will help millions of Indonesia's children develop the skills they need to have a successful school experience."

The Indonesian version of Sesame Street is the latest in a line of collaborations between USAID and the Sesame Workshop to design and produce Sesame Street programs that appeal to children in other countries, including Egypt, South Africa, India, and Bangladesh. ★



Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice talks with students at the MakMuriyah madrassah in Jakarta, where she also announced that USAID will help bring Sesame Street to schools in Indonesia. The school is part of President Bush's Education Initiative for Indonesia. To her right are Ambassador B. Lynn Pascoe and USAID/Indonesia Mission Director William M. Frej.

Yulianti Susila, USAID/Indonesia

Malawi Muslims Start Business School after U.S. Imam Visits

BY JIM FISHER-THOMPSON
Washington File Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—The visit to Malawi of a prominent American imam has had lasting effects on the educational infrastructure of the developing southern African nation.

Following a series of sermons delivered by Imam Darryl Wainwright emphasizing self-reliance, Malawi's Muslim community decided to establish a business school at a mosque, using volunteer teachers. Wainwright toured the nation as part of the State Department's worldwide outreach program to Muslims.

Muslim outreach has been an important task as well for USAID.

Starting in 2003, for example, the Agency established the Islam Working Group to provide advice and guidance to development experts working in Muslim communities in Europe and Central Asia. USAID currently is operating programs aimed at building democracy and civil societies in 10 predominantly Muslim countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

The self-help project in Malawi was inspired by the American imam's preaching after Juma'ah prayers at a mosque in the capital in October 2005, according to a document provided by the U.S. Embassy in Malawi's capital, Lilongwe.

The imam gave "an inspirational message that focused on the importance of education, hard work, and self-reliance for Muslims," the embassy reported. When the congregation then asked him for money to start a school, Wainwright "encouraged them to look first to their own resources rather than waiting for outside assistance."

The American imam cited the example of his own mosque in Baltimore, which started a school completely on its own, employing volunteer teachers.

The group of young Muslim professionals in Lilongwe who took up Wainwright's suggestion began with one course, business accounting, and within a month the initial class of five students had grown to 50.

The school's new principal, after contacting the U.S. Embassy to thank Wainwright for his help, said he hoped the school would help train Muslims who, in turn, could improve the social and economic welfare of Lilongwe's Muslim community.

The principal said his school could serve as a model for other mosques in Malawi, emphasizing: "We attribute all this to Imam Wainwright's visit." ★

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<http://usinfo.state.gov>

PARKS IN PERIL PROJECT SAVES CONDORS



A young woman in the Oyacachi indigenous community, located in the heart of the Condor Bioserve in Ecuador. She and other young men and women participate in a Parks in Peril ecotourism project to reduce cattle grazing and attract tourists to sight Andean bears. The USAID-supported project has helped Oyacachi residents reduce the number of Andean bear attacks on cattle. See story on page 6.

A massive humanitarian aid mission to Pakistani victims of the October earthquake continues to assist more than 2 million survivors. The photographs on this page show some of the people helped by USAID. They were taken by *FrontLines* Editorial Director Ben Barber and freelance photographer Masako Imaoka during a February visit to the earthquake zone.



Ben Barber, USAID

WATER HEATER—A child stands in Mehra Camp, located alongside the Indus River, for Pakistanis who came down from mountains to escape winter snows after homes were destroyed in the earthquake. Behind her stands a heater to warm water for bathing and washing clothes.



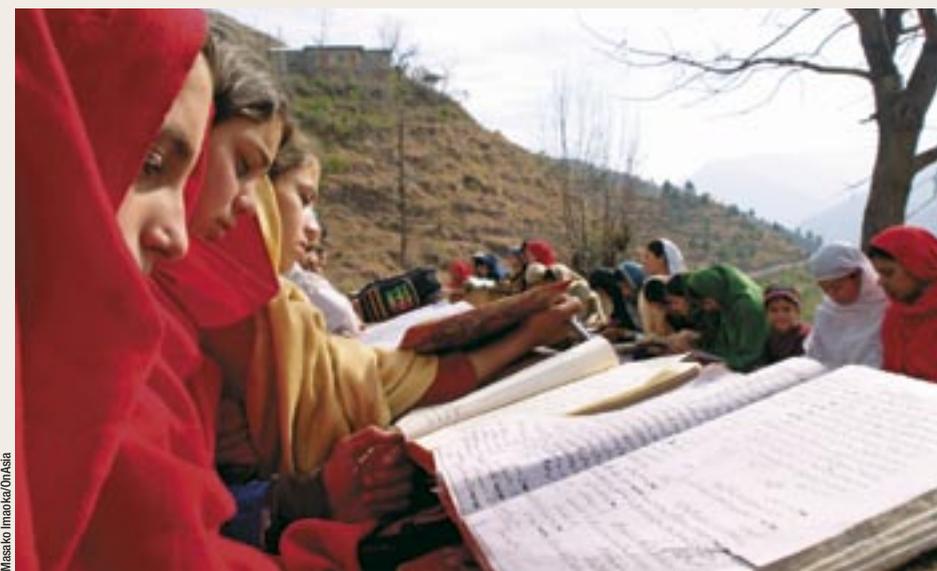
Masako Imaoka/OnAsia

HAIRCUT—A young boy gets his head shaved in Bagh, a town in northern Pakistan severely damaged by the quake. Outside the shop, trucks haul construction materials and workmen dig through rubble to salvage metal rods and useful stones.



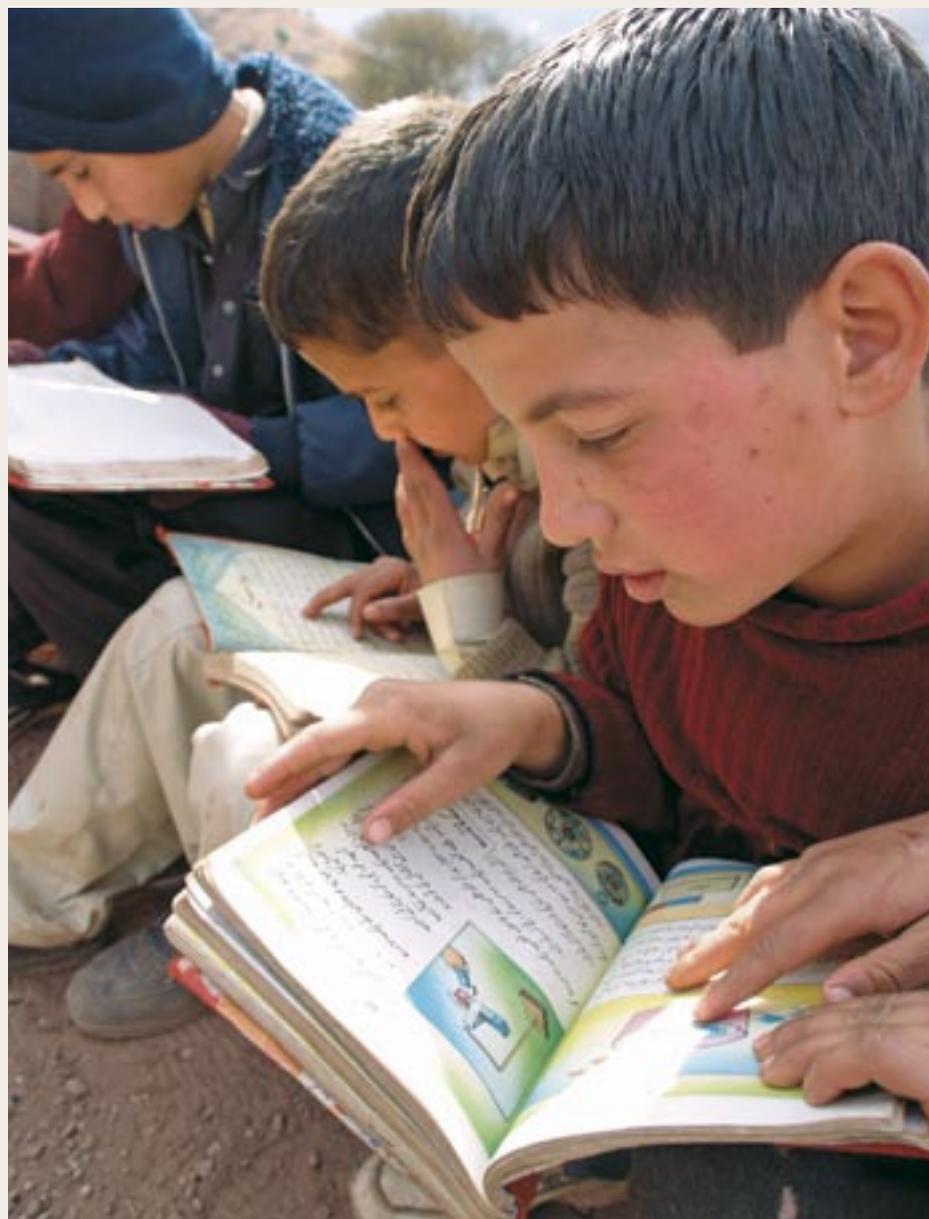
Ben Barber, USAID

SAWMILL SLICING—Villagers in Langla use a bandsaw powered by a small gasoline engine to slice heavy beams that injured and killed many in the 2005 earthquake into lightweight building studs to support thin metal roofs less likely to kill in future quakes.



Masako Imaoka/OnAsia

GIRLS STUDY—On the open terrace in front of the ruins of the Langla village school, girls study Urdu texts.



Masako Imaoka/OnAsia

BOYS STUDY—In Langla Village, where the school was damaged beyond repair by the quake, boys study outside as their teachers look on. Nearby, girls also study.



Masako Imaoka/OnAsia

FASCINATING NEWS—A vendor sells newspapers in the center of Muzaffarabad, capital of Azad Kashmir controlled by Pakistan. Thousands died as the center of the city was demolished in the earthquake, and cleanup was continuing in February.